

**Draft Environmental Assessment**

**BLACK'S FORD  
FISHING ACCESS SITE  
BOAT RAMP IMPROVEMENT PROJECT**



**July 2007**

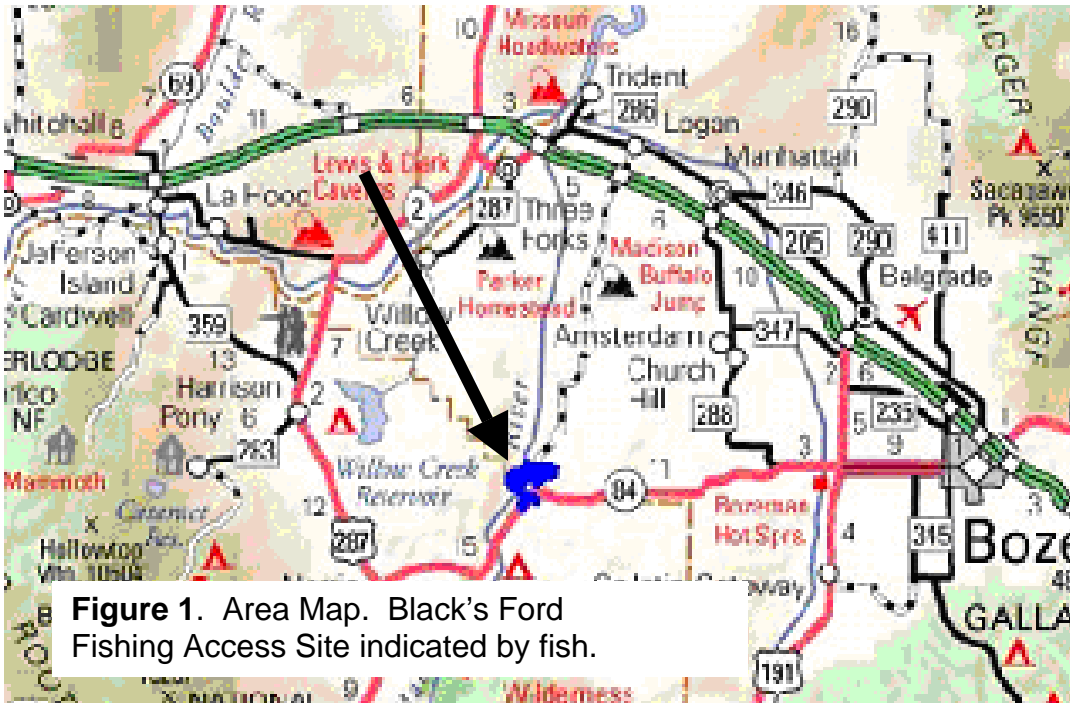


***Montana Fish,  
Wildlife & Parks***

# **Black's Ford Fishing Access Site Boat Ramp Improvement Project Draft Environmental Assessment MEPA, NEPA, MCA 23-1-110 CHECKLIST**

## **PART I. PROPOSED ACTION DESCRIPTION**

1. **Type of proposed state action:** Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (MFWP) proposes to improve facilities at Black's Ford Fishing Access Site (FAS) by replacing the existing concrete plank boat ramp with a 32' x 40' concrete cast-in-place boat ramp.
2. **Agency authority for the proposed action:** The 1977 Montana Legislature enacted statute 87-1-605 MCA, which directs Fish, Wildlife & Parks to acquire, develop and operate a system of fishing accesses. The legislature established a funding account to ensure that this function would be accomplished. Sections 23-1-105, 23-1-106, 15-1-122, 61-3-321, and 87-1-303, MCA, authorize the collection fees and charges for the use of state park system units and fishing access sites, and contain rule-making authority for their use, occupancy and protection.
3. **Name of project:** Black's Ford Fishing Access Site Boat Ramp Improvement Project.
4. **Name, address and phone number of project sponsor (if other than the agency):** Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks is the project sponsor.
5. **If applicable:**  
Estimated Construction/Commencement Date: Fall 2007  
Estimated Construction Completion Date: Fall 2007  
Current Status of Project Design (% complete): 75%
6. **Location affected by proposed action (county, range and township:** Black's Ford FAS is located in Gallatin County in the east half of Section 19, Township 2, Range 2 East. Black's Ford FAS can be reached from Bozeman by traveling 23 miles west on Highway 84 (Norris Road) or from Three Forks by traveling south on the Madison River Road (See Figure 1). Black's Ford FAS is downstream from Ennis Reservoir just after the river flows through Bear Trap Canyon and enters the lower Madison River Valley.



**Figure 1.** Area Map. Black's Ford Fishing Access Site indicated by fish.

7. **Project size -- estimate the number of acres that would be directly affected that are currently:**

	<u>Acres</u>
(a) Developed:	
Residential	<u>0</u>
Industrial	<u>0</u>
(b) Open Space/Woodlands/Recreation	<u>0</u>
(c) Wetlands/Riparian Areas	<u>0</u>
(d) Floodplain	<u>1.0</u>
(e) Productive:	
Irrigated cropland	<u>0</u>
Dry cropland	<u>0</u>
Forestry	<u>0</u>
Rangeland	<u>0</u>
Other	<u>0</u>

**8. Listing of any other Local, State or Federal agency that has overlapping or additional jurisdiction.**

- (a) Permits:** All permits will be obtained prior to applicable project construction. Permits will be acquired by FWP's Design and Construction Bureau.

<u>Agency Name</u>	<u>Permit</u>
Montana Dept of Fish, Wildlife & Parks	SPA 124
Montana Dept of Environmental Quality	318 (if required)
US Corps of Engineers	Section 404
US Corps of Engineers	Section 10

**(b) Funding:**

<u>Agency Name</u>	<u>Funding Amount</u>
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks	\$22,000

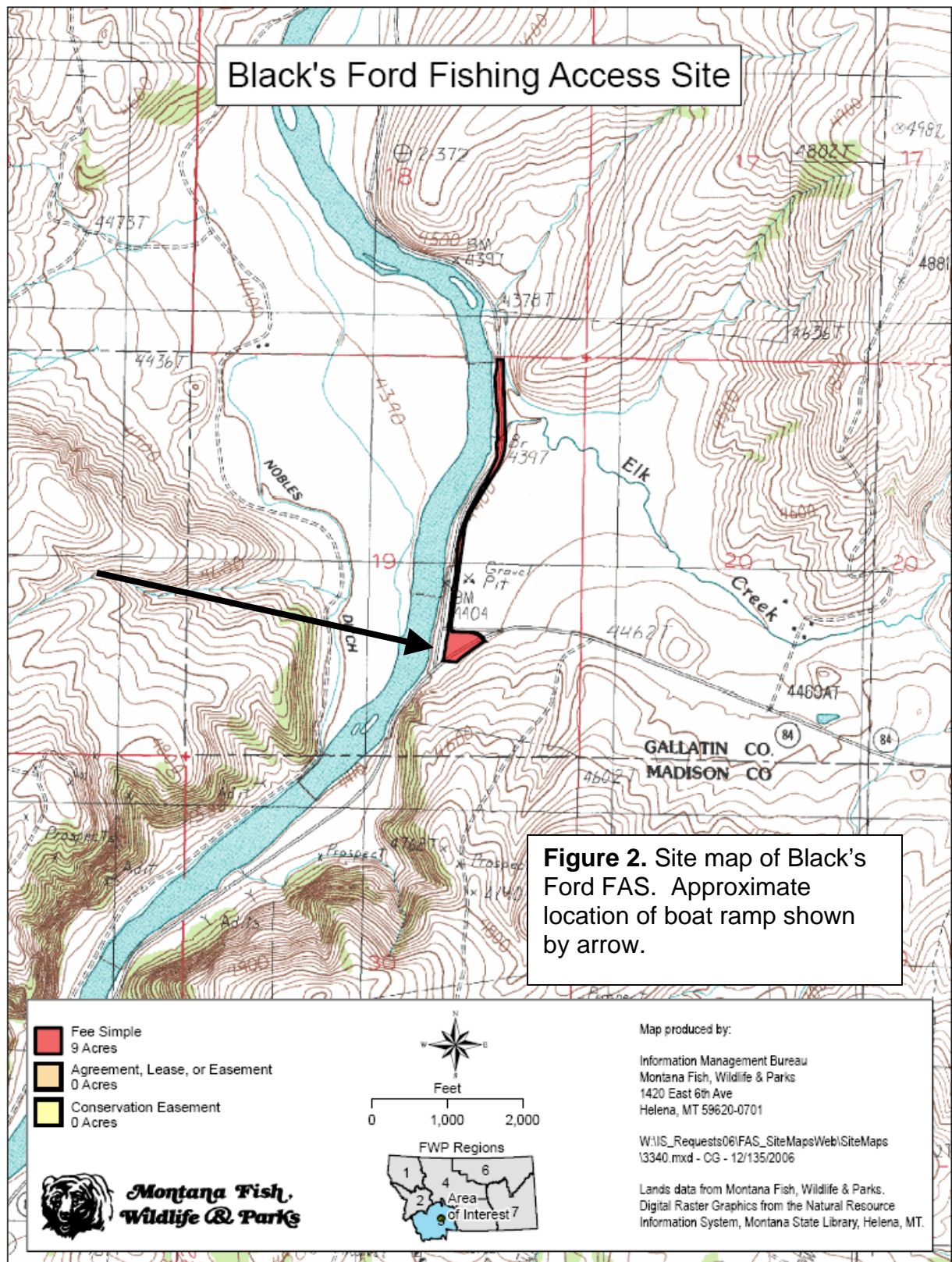
**(c) Other Overlapping or Additional Jurisdictional Responsibilities:**

<u>Agency Name</u>	<u>Type of Responsibility</u>
N/A	

**9. Narrative summary of the proposed action or project including the benefits and purpose of the proposed action:**

Black's Ford FAS is located at River Mile 24 on the Madison River on the right side as you float down stream (see Figure 2). The Madison is one of Montana's premier wild trout rivers. Due to its national reputation, heavy fishing and recreation pressure, good access, high scenic value, and excellent wild trout populations, it has been classified as a "Blue Ribbon" trout stream.

Black's Ford has been a fishing access site for many years and is heavily used, especially in the summer. The section of the Madison River from the mouth to Ennis Lake supported 44,975 angler days in 2003, representing 1,001 trips. That level of fishing pressure places it 12<sup>th</sup> in the state and 5<sup>th</sup> in the region. This figure does not take into account a large number of recreational floaters who also use Black's Ford FAS to take out after floating through Bear Trap Canyon (see Fig. 3). While the number of anglers who use the site has remained fairly steady over the last five years, the number of recreational floaters has risen steadily. Perhaps as much as 75% of the site use is by non-anglers.







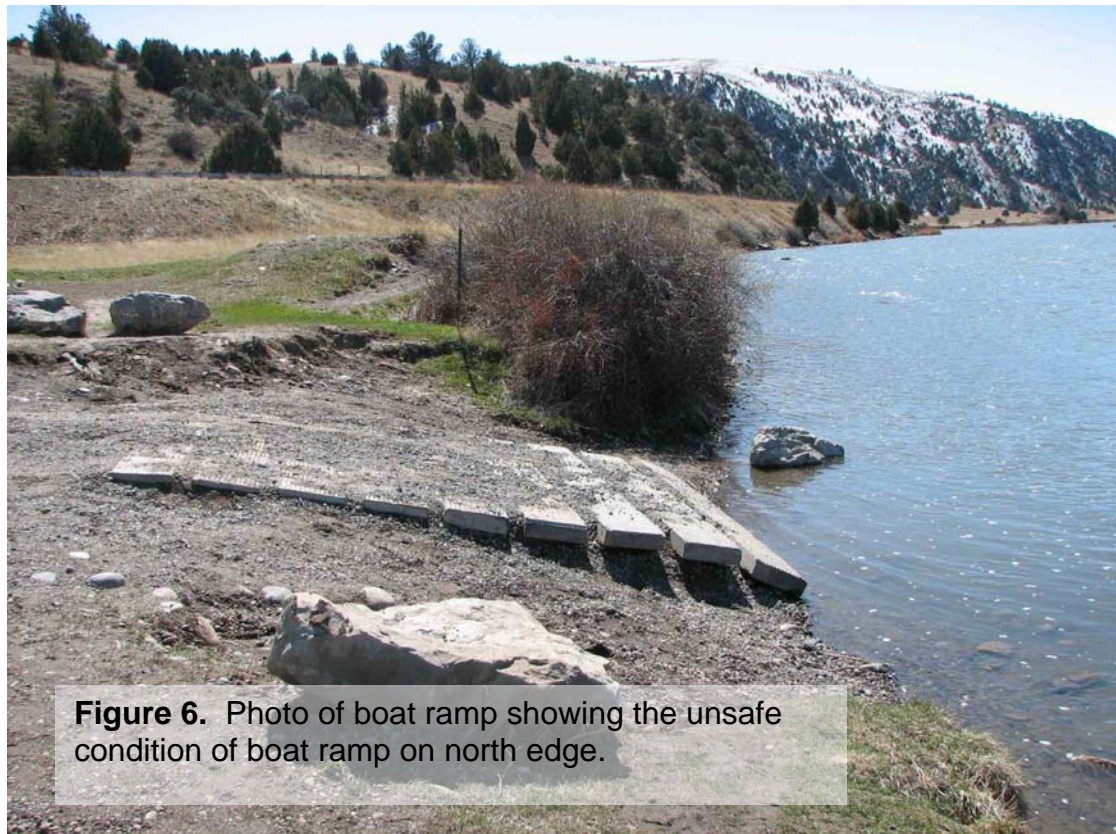
The FAS currently consists of a graveled parking area for up to 100 cars, two vault latrines, and a concrete-plank boat ramp (see Figs 4, 5, 6 and 7). The current boat ramp is too narrow, steep, and short to adequately support the level of use the site receives (see Fig. 5). Vehicles often spin out in the process of driving back up the ramp, causing erosion and further damage to the ramp. Also, the northern edges of the concrete planks are no longer level with the underlying soil, causing an unsafe drop-off (see Figure 6).



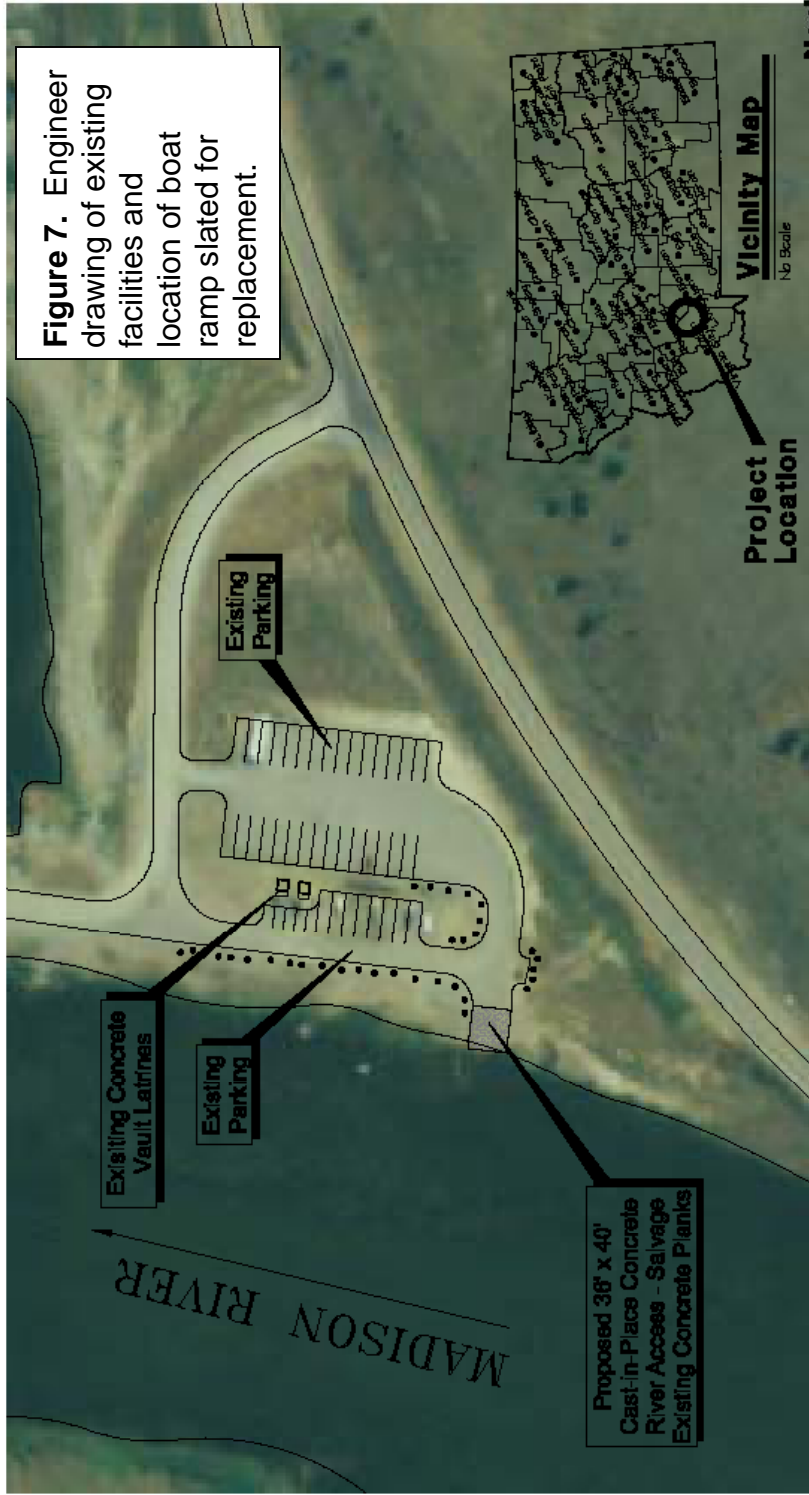




**Figure 5.** Additional photo of boat ramp at Black's Ford FAS.



**Figure 6.** Photo of boat ramp showing the unsafe condition of boat ramp on north edge.



**Figure 7.** Engineer drawing of existing facilities and location of boat ramp slated for replacement.

200' 100' 50' 0' 25' 15' 10'

**River Access Improvement Plan**

SCALE: 1" = 100'

**North**



FWP proposes to reconfigure the grade so the slope is reduced and replace the existing ramp with a double-wide (32ft) hardened boat ramp of cast-in-place concrete, which would extend further into the river bed than the existing planks and thus reducing erosion and generation of silt during use. Cast-in-place concrete boat ramps are very durable and would withstand heavy use. The wider ramp would also reduce erosion that is occurring on the northern side of the ramp.

In summary, the proposed project would improve the usability and implement site protection measures at a popular FAS and would also improve the public safety of boaters and floaters while loading and unloading their crafts. The proposed project would have no significant environmental impacts and would increase public recreational values in the area.

## **PART II. ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW**

- 1. Description and analysis of reasonable alternatives (including the no action alternative) to the proposed action whenever alternatives are reasonably available and prudent to consider and a discussion of how the alternatives would be implemented:**

### **Alternative A: No Action**

If no action is taken, FWP would not replace the existing boat ramp at Black's Ford FAS. High rates of use of the site and the ramp often leads to a back-log of vehicles anxious to load or unload watercraft at the narrow, single-vehicle-wide ramp. Continued use of the current ramp would lead to additional erosion of the riverbed at the base of the slope, which would further reduce the effectiveness of the ramp and could eventually render it useless. Public recreation in the area would be affected because Black's Ford is heavily relied upon as a take-out point for anglers and floaters coming from various put-in points upstream.

### **Preferred Alternative B: Proposed Action**

The preferred alternative is for FWP to replace the existing boat ramp at Black's Ford FAS with a more gradually sloped, wider ramp with a base of cast-in-place concrete. The reduced slope would increase public safety and ease of use, and the cast-in-place concrete design would be more durable, aesthetic, and better suited for heavy use. The improved ramp would also allow better maneuverability at the busy site and use by two vehicles at the same time during peak hours.

- 2. Evaluation and listing of mitigation, stipulation, or other control measures enforceable by the agency or another government agency:**

There are no formal stipulations of mitigation or other controls associated with the proposed action. This action does not involve any granting of a license on which stipulations would be placed.

### **PART III. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

- 1. Describe the level of public involvement for this project if any, and, given the complexity and the seriousness of the environmental issues associated with the proposed action, is the level of public involvement appropriate under the circumstances?**

The public will be notified by way of two statewide press releases in *The Independent Record* and *The Bozeman Chronicle* and by public notice on the Fish, Wildlife & Parks web page: [http:// fwp.mt.gov/publicnotices](http://fwp.mt.gov/publicnotices).

- 2. Duration of comment period, if any.** 30 days. The comment period will open on Wednesday, August 1, 2007 and close at 5pm on Friday, August 31, 2007.

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks invites you to comment on the attached proposal. Public comment will be accepted until 5:00 p.m. on August 31, 2007. Comments should be sent to the following:

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks  
Attn: Tom Greason  
1400 South 19<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
Bozeman, MT 59718

Or emailed to: [tgreason@mt.gov](mailto:tgreason@mt.gov)

### **PART V. EA PREPARATION**

- 1. Based on the significance criteria evaluated in this EA, is an EIS required? (YES/NO)? If an EIS is not required, explain why the EA is the appropriate level of analysis for this proposed action.**

Based on an evaluation of impacts to the physical and human environment under MEPA, this environmental review revealed no significant negative impacts from the proposed action: therefore, an EIS is not necessary and an environmental assessment is the appropriate level of analysis.

- 2. Name, title, address and phone number of the person(s) responsible for preparing the EA:**

Linnaea Shroeer-Smith  
Independent Contractor  
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(406) 495-9620

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FAS Coordinator  
PO Box 200701  
Helena, MT 59601  
(406) 444-7885

Tom Greason  
Region 3 FAS Manager  
1400 South 19<sup>th</sup>  
Bozeman, Montana 59718  
(406) 994-6987

- 3. List of agencies consulted during preparation of the EA:**

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

Parks Division  
Wildlife Division  
Fisheries Division  
Design & Construction Bureau  
Lands Division  
Montana State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO)  
Montana Department of Commerce – Tourism  
Montana Natural Heritage Program – Natural Resources Information System (NRIS)



## PART VI. ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW CHECKLIST

### 3. Evaluation of the impacts of the Proposed Action including secondary and cumulative impacts on the Physical and Human Environment.

#### A. PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

1. <u>LAND RESOURCES</u>  Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT *				Can Impact Be Mitigated *	Comment Index
	Unknown *	None	Minor *	Potentially Significant		
a. **Soil instability or changes in geologic substructure?		X				1a.
b. Disruption, displacement, erosion, compaction, moisture loss, or over-covering of soil, which would reduce productivity or fertility?			X		yes	1b,
c. **Destruction, covering or modification of any unique geologic or physical features?		X				1c.
d. Changes in siltation, deposition or erosion patterns that may modify the channel of a river or stream or the bed or shore of a lake?			X			1d.
e. Exposure of people or property to earthquakes, landslides, ground failure, or other natural hazard?		X				
f. Other:		X				

**Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (attach additional pages of narrative if needed):**

- 1a. The installation of the new boat ramp would not affect geologic substructure or soil stability.
- 1b. Soil would be disturbed during installation of the boat ramp which will cause some erosion, compaction, moisture loss and over-covering of soil, but the areas affected would be very small (<250 SF) and the effects would be minor. Best Management Practices (BMPs) would be followed during all aspects of the project.
- 1c. No unique geologic features would be destroyed, covered, or modified by the proposed action.
- 1d. It is possible but extremely unlikely that the new boat ramp would cause changes in deposition patterns that might slightly modify the channel of the Madison River.

\* Include a narrative explanation under Part III describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or cannot be evaluated.

\*\* Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.604-1a (ARM).

\*\*\* Determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the checklist. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.

\*\*\*\* Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.

2. <u>AIR</u> Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT *				Can Impact Be Mitigated *	Comment Index
	Unknown *	None	Minor *	Potentially Significant		
a. **Emission of air pollutants or deterioration of ambient air quality? (Also see 13 (c).)			X			2a.
b. Creation of objectionable odors?		X				
c. Alteration of air movement, moisture, or temperature patterns or any change in climate, either locally or regionally?		X				
d. Adverse effects on vegetation, including crops, due to increased emissions of pollutants?		X				
e. ***For P-R/D-J projects, will the project result in any discharge, which will conflict with federal or state air quality regs? (Also see 2a.)		X				
f. Other:		X				

**Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Air Resources (attach additional pages of narrative if needed):**

- 2a. Minor and temporary dust and vehicle emissions will be created by heavy equipment during construction, but would end after completion of the project.

\* Include a narrative explanation under Part III describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or cannot be evaluated.

\*\* Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.604-1a (ARM).

\*\*\* Determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the checklist. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.

\*\*\*\* Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.

3. <u>WATER</u> Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT *				Can Impact Be Mitigated*	Comment Index
	Unknown *	None	Minor *	Potentially Significant		
a. *Discharge into surface water or any alteration of surface water quality including but not limited to temperature, dissolved oxygen or turbidity?			X			3a.
b. Changes in drainage patterns or the rate and amount of surface runoff?		X				
c. Alteration of the course or magnitude of floodwater or other flows?		X				
d. Changes in the amount of surface water in any water body or creation of a new water body?		X				
e. Exposure of people or property to water related hazards such as flooding?		X				
f. Changes in the quality of groundwater?		X				
g. Changes in the quantity of groundwater?		X				
h. Increase in risk of contamination of surface or groundwater?		X				
i. Effects on any existing water right or reservation?		X				
j. Effects on other water users as a result of any alteration in surface or groundwater quality?		X				
k. Effects on other users as a result of any alteration in surface or groundwater quantity?		X				
l. ****For P-R/D-J, will the project affect a designated floodplain? (Also see 3c.)		X				
m. ***For P-R/D-J, will the project result in any discharge that will affect federal or state water quality regulations? (Also see 3a.)		X				
n. Other:		X				

**Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Water Resources (attach additional pages of narrative if needed):**

- 3a. The proposed action would cause a small increase in turbidity in the vicinity of the boat ramp during installation but would largely end after completion of the project. It is probable that overall, ongoing turbidity caused by regular use would be lower with the new ramp than with the old one because of the wider, longer design. The change would not be significant, however.

\* Include a narrative explanation under Part III describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or cannot be evaluated.

\*\* Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.604-1a (ARM).

\*\*\* Determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the checklist. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.

\*\*\*\* Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.



4. <b>VEGETATION</b> Will the proposed action result in?	IMPACT *				Can Impact Be Mitigated *	Comment Index
	Unknown *	None	Minor *	Potentially Significant		
a. Changes in the diversity, productivity or abundance of plant species (including trees, shrubs, grass, crops, and aquatic plants)?			X		yes	4a.
b. Alteration of a plant community?			X			4b.
c. Adverse effects on any unique, rare, threatened, or endangered species?		X				4c.
d. Reduction in acreage or productivity of any agricultural land?		X				
e. Establishment or spread of noxious weeds?		X				
f. ****For P-R/D-J, will the project affect wetlands, or prime and unique farmland?		X				
g. Other:		X				

**Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Vegetation (attach additional pages of narrative if needed):**

- 4a. The replacement of the boat ramp would cause the removal of approximately 50 sf of grasses and weedy forbs on either side of the existing boat ramp. All disturbed areas would be reseeded.
- 4b. Please see comment 4a.
- 4c. There are no documented observations of any threatened or endangered plant species within the proposed project site.

\* Include a narrative explanation under Part III describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or cannot be evaluated.

\*\* Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.604-1a (ARM).

\*\*\* Determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the checklist. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.

\*\*\*\* Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.

<b>** 5. FISH/WILDLIFE</b>  Will the proposed action result in:	<b>IMPACT *</b>				<b>Can Impact Be Mitigated *</b>	<b>Comment Index</b>
	<b>Unknown *</b>	<b>None</b>	<b>Minor *</b>	<b>Potentially Significant</b>		
a. Deterioration of critical fish or wildlife habitat?		X				
b. Changes in the diversity or abundance of game animals or bird species?		X				
c. Changes in the diversity or abundance of nongame species?		X				
d. Introduction of new species into an area?		X				
e. Creation of a barrier to the migration or movement of animals?		X				
f. Adverse effects on any unique, rare, threatened, or endangered species?		X				5f.
g. Increase in conditions that stress wildlife populations or limit abundance (including harassment, legal or illegal harvest or other human activity)?		X				
h. ****For P-R/D-J, will the project be performed in any area in which T&E species are present, and will the project affect any T&E species or their habitat? (Also see 5f.)		X				
i. ***For P-R/D-J, will the project introduce or export any species not presently or historically occurring in the receiving location? (Also see 5d.)		X				
j. Other:		X				

**Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Fish and Wildlife (attach additional pages of narrative if needed):**

5f. A search of the Montana Natural Heritage Database showed one sensitive species that might occur near the proposed project site. Please see Appendix 2 for a complete discussion of species of concern found in the Black's Ford FAS area.

\* Include a narrative explanation under Part III describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or cannot be evaluated.

\*\* Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.604-1a (ARM).

\*\*\* Determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the checklist. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.

\*\*\*\* Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.

## B. HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

6. <u>NOISE/ELECTRICAL EFFECTS</u> Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT *				Can Impact Be Mitigated *	Comment Index
	Unknown *	None	Minor *	Potentially Significant		
a. Increases in existing noise levels?		X				6a.
b. Exposure of people to severe or nuisance noise levels?		X				
c. Creation of electrostatic or electromagnetic effects that could be detrimental to human health or property?		X				
d. Interference with radio or television reception and operation?		X				
e. Other:		X				

**Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Noise/Electrical Effects (attach additional pages of narrative if needed):**

- 6a. There will be a temporary increase in noise level during construction of the new boat ramp but would end after completion of the project. There are no residences adjacent to the site that would be disturbed by the construction.

\* Include a narrative explanation under Part III describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or cannot be evaluated.

\*\* Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.604-1a (ARM).

\*\*\* Determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the checklist. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.

\*\*\*\* Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.



7. <b>LAND USE</b>  Will the proposed action result in:	<b>IMPACT *</b>				<b>Can Impact Be Mitigated *</b>	<b>Comment Index</b>
	<b>Unknown *</b>	<b>None</b>	<b>Minor *</b>	<b>Potentially Significant</b>		
a. Alteration of or interference with the productivity or profitability of the existing land use of an area?		X				7a.
b. Conflicted with a designated natural area or area of unusual scientific or educational importance?		X				
c. Conflict with any existing land use whose presence would constrain or potentially prohibit the proposed action?		X				
d. Adverse effects on or relocation of residences?		X				
e. Other:		X				

**Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Use (attach additional pages of narrative if needed):**

- 7a. There would be no alteration or interference with the existing land use in the greater Black's Ford FAS area. The existing land use is for recreational access/fishing activities. This project is intended to enhance those activities.

\* Include a narrative explanation under Part III describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or cannot be evaluated.

\*\* Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.604-1a (ARM).

\*\*\* Determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the checklist. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.

\*\*\*\* Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.

8. <b>RISK/HEALTH HAZARDS</b>  Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT *				Can Impact Be Mitigated *	Comment Index
	Unknown *	None	Minor *	Potentially Significant		
a. Risk of an explosion or release of hazardous substances (including, but not limited to oil, pesticides, chemicals, or radiation) in the event of an accident or other forms of disruption?		X				8a.
b. Affect an existing emergency response or emergency evacuation plan, or create a need for a new plan?		X				
c. Creation of any human health hazard or potential hazard?			X positive			8c.
d. ***For P-R/D-J, will any chemical toxicants be used? (Also see 8a)		X				
e. Other:		X				

**Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Risk/Health Hazards (attach additional pages of narrative if needed):**

- 8a. The proposed action will not create any foreseeable risks or health hazards.
- 8c. The design of the proposed new boat ramp includes a more gradual slope which is both easier and safer for the public to use.

\* Include a narrative explanation under Part III describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or cannot be evaluated.

\*\* Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.604-1a (ARM).

\*\*\* Determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the checklist. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.

\*\*\*\* Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.

9. <b>COMMUNITY IMPACT</b>  Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT *				Can Impact Be Mitigated *	Comment Index
	Unknown *	None	Minor *	Potentially Significant		
a. Alteration of the location, distribution, density, or growth rate of the human population of an area?		X				X
b. Alteration of the social structure of a community?		X				
c. Alteration of the level or distribution of employment or community or personal income?		X				
d. Changes in industrial or commercial activity?		X				
e. Increased traffic hazards or effects on existing transportation facilities or patterns of movement of people and goods?		X				
f. Other:		X				

**Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Community Impact (attach additional pages of narrative if needed):**

- 9a. It is unlikely that the proposed project would have any discernable effect on any nearby communities.

\* Include a narrative explanation under Part III describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or cannot be evaluated.

\*\* Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.604-1a (ARM).

\*\*\* Determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the checklist. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.

\*\*\*\* Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.

10. <u>PUBLIC SERVICES/TAXES/UTILITIES</u>  Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT *				Can Impact Be Mitigated *	Comment Index
	Unknown *	None	Minor *	Potentially Significant		
a. Will the proposed action have an effect upon or result in a need for new or altered governmental services in any of the following areas: fire or police protection, schools, parks/recreational facilities, roads or other public maintenance, water supply, sewer or septic systems, solid waste disposal, health, or other governmental services? If any, specify:		X				
b. Will the proposed action have an effect upon the local or state tax base and revenues?		X				
c. Will the proposed action result in a need for new facilities or substantial alterations of any of the following utilities: electric power, natural gas, other fuel supply or distribution systems, or communications?		X				
d. Will the proposed action result in increased use of any energy source?		X				
e. **Define projected revenue sources						10e.
f. **Define projected maintenance costs.						10f.
g. Other:		X				

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Public Services/Taxes/Utilities (attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

10e. The proposed project will be funded through the FAS Capitol Improvements Fund.

10f. The proposed project would not require additional maintenance costs.

\* Include a narrative explanation under Part III describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or cannot be evaluated.

\*\* Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.604-1a (ARM).

\*\*\* Determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the checklist. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.

\*\*\*\* Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.

<b>** 11. <u>AESTHETICS/RECREATION</u></b>  <b>Will the proposed action result in:</b>	<b>IMPACT *</b>				<b>Can Impact Be Mitigated *</b>	<b>Comment Index</b>
	<b>Unknown *</b>	<b>None</b>	<b>Minor *</b>	<b>Potentially Significant</b>		
a. Alteration of any scenic vista or creation of an aesthetically offensive site or effect that is open to public view?		X				
b. Alteration of the aesthetic character of a community or neighborhood?		X				
c. **Alteration of the quality or quantity of recreational/tourism opportunities and settings? (Attach Tourism Report.)			X			11c.
d. ***For P-R/D-J, will any designated or proposed wild or scenic rivers, trails or wilderness areas be impacted? (Also see 11a, 11c.)		X				
e. Other:		X				

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Aesthetics/Recreation (attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

11c. See Attachment A for Tourism Report.

\* Include a narrative explanation under Part III describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or cannot be evaluated.

\*\* Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.604-1a (ARM).

\*\*\* Determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the checklist. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.

\*\*\*\* Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.

12. <u>CULTURAL/HISTORICAL RESOURCES</u> Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT *				Can Impact Be Mitigated *	Comment Index
	Unknown *	None	Minor *	Potentially Significant		
a. **Destruction or alteration of any site, structure or object of prehistoric historic, or paleontological importance?		X				
b. Physical change that would affect unique cultural values?		X				
c. Effects on existing religious or sacred uses of a site or area?		X				
d. ****For P-R/D-J, will the project affect historic or cultural resources? Attach SHPO letter of clearance. (Also see 12.a.)		X				12d.
e. Other:		X				

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Cultural/Historical Resources (attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

12a. The proposed project will not result in the destruction or alteration of any site, structure, or object of prehistoric, historic, or paleontological importance. Please see SHPO letter of clearance in Attachment B.

\* Include a narrative explanation under Part III describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or cannot be evaluated.

\*\* Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.604-1a (ARM).

\*\*\* Determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the checklist. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.

\*\*\*\* Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.



## SIGNIFICANCE CRITERIA

13. <b>SUMMARY EVALUATION OF SIGNIFICANCE</b>  Will the proposed action, considered as a whole:	IMPACT *				Can Impact Be Mitigated *	Comment Index
	Unknown *	None	Minor *	Potentially Significant		
a. Have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? (A project or program may result in impacts on two or more separate resources that create a significant effect when considered together or in total.)		X				
b. Involve potential risks or adverse effects, which are uncertain but extremely hazardous if they were to occur?		X				
c. Potentially conflict with the substantive requirements of any local, state, or federal law, regulation, standard or formal plan?		X				
d. Establish a precedent or likelihood that future actions with significant environmental impacts will be proposed?		X				
e. Generate substantial debate or controversy about the nature of the impacts that would be created?		X				
f. ***For P-R/D-J, is the project expected to have organized opposition or generate substantial public controversy? (Also see 13e.)		X				
g. ****For P-R/D-J, list any federal or state permits required.		X				

**Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Significance Criteria (attach additional pages of narrative if needed):**

13a. This EA found no significant impacts to the human or physical environment from the proposed action.

## **PART III. NARRATIVE EVALUATION AND COMMENT**

The proposed project of improving the boat ramp at Black's Ford FAS is small in scope and construction would be limited to an area that is already developed and heavily trafficked. These circumstances make it unlikely that the human or physical environment would be negatively affected. However, public recreational values in the area would be increased by the implementation of this project.

\* Include a narrative explanation under Part III describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or cannot be evaluated.

\*\* Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.604-1a (ARM).

\*\*\* Determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the checklist. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.

\*\*\*\* Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.

**APPENDIX 1**  
**HB495**  
**PROJECT QUALIFICATION CHECKLIST**

**Date** April 6, 2007

**Person Reviewing** Linnaea Schroeer-Smith

**Project Location:** Black's Ford FAS, T02S, R02E, Section 19 in Gallatin County.

**Description of Proposed Work:** Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks proposes improving facilities at Black's Ford FAS by reducing the slope of the boat ramp, and by replacing the existing single-width concrete-plank boat ramp with a double-wide cable-mat type boat ramp.

The following checklist is intended to be a guide for determining whether a proposed development or improvement is of enough significance to fall under HB 495 rules. (Please check    all that apply and comment as necessary.)

- ☐ **A. New roadway or trail built over undisturbed land?**  
Comments: None
- ☐ **B. New building construction (buildings <100 sf and vault latrines exempt)?**  
Comments: None
- ☒ **C. Any excavation of 20 c.y. or greater?**  
Comments: The construction of the gravel ramp will require the excavation of 50 c.y.
- ☐ **D. New parking lots built over undisturbed land or expansion of existing lot that increases parking capacity by 25% or more?**  
Comments: None
- ☐ **E. Any new shoreline alteration that exceeds a double wide boat ramp or handicapped fishing station?**  
Comments: None.
- ☐ **F. Any new construction into lakes, reservoirs, or streams?**  
Comments:
- ☐ **G. Any new construction in an area with National Registry quality cultural artifacts (as determined by State Historical Preservation Office)?**  
Comments: SHPO clearance has been obtained for the proposed project.
- ☐ **H. Any new above ground utility lines?**  
Comments: None

☐ I. **Any increase or decrease in campsites of 25% or more of an existing number of campsites?**

Comments: None.

☐ J. **Proposed project significantly changes the existing features or use pattern; including effects of a series of individual projects?**

Comments: None

**If any of the above are checked, HB 495 rules apply to this proposed work and should be documented on the MEPA/HB495 CHECKLIST. Refer to MEPA/HB495 Cross Reference Summary for further assistance.**

## APPENDIX 2

### Sensitive Plants and Animals in the Black's Ford FAS area.

A search of the Montana Natural Heritage Program (MNHP) element occurrence database ([nhp.nris.state.mt.us/eoportal](http://nhp.nris.state.mt.us/eoportal)) indicates no known occurrences of federally listed threatened, endangered, or proposed threatened or endangered plant or animal species in the proposed project site.

### Species of Concern Terms and Definitions

**Montana Species of Concern.** The term "**Species of Concern**" includes taxa that are at-risk or potentially at-risk due to rarity, restricted distribution, habitat loss, and/or other factors. The term also encompasses species that have a special designation by organizations or land management agencies in Montana, including: Bureau of Land Management Special Status and Watch species; U.S. Forest Service Sensitive and Watch species; U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Threatened, Endangered and Candidate species.

#### ▼ Status Ranks (Global and State)

The international network of Natural Heritage Programs employs a standardized ranking system to denote global (**G** -- range-wide) and state status (**S**) (NatureServe 2003). Species are assigned numeric ranks ranging from 1 (critically imperiled) to 5 (demonstrably secure), reflecting the relative degree to which they are "at-risk". Rank definitions are given below. A number of factors are considered in assigning ranks -- the number, size and distribution of known "occurrences" or populations, population trends (if known), habitat sensitivity, and threat. Factors in a species' life history that make it especially vulnerable are also considered (e.g., dependence on a specific pollinator).

### Status Ranks

Code	Definition
<b>G1</b> <b>S1</b>	At high risk because of extremely limited and/or rapidly declining numbers, range, and/or habitat, making it highly vulnerable to global extinction or extirpation in the state.
<b>G2</b> <b>S2</b>	At risk because of very limited and/or declining numbers, range, and/or habitat, making it vulnerable to global extinction or extirpation in the state.
<b>G3</b> <b>S3</b>	Potentially at risk because of limited and/or declining numbers, range, and/or habitat, even though it may be abundant in some areas.
<b>G4</b> <b>S4</b>	Uncommon but not rare (although it may be rare in parts of its range), and usually widespread. Apparently not vulnerable in most of its range, but possibly cause for long-term concern.
<b>G5</b> <b>S5</b>	Common, widespread, and abundant (although it may be rare in parts of its range). Not vulnerable in most of its range.

## 1. *Spilogale gracilis* (Western Spotted Skunk)

State: **S1S3**

Global: **G5**

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service:

U.S. Forest Service:

U.S. Bureau of Land Management: **Sensitive**

This sensitive species is found in the Black's Ford FAS area. It is unlikely that the proposed project would affect this species because of the project's small scope and existing high traffic and disturbance of the site.

Information Courtesy of Montana Natural Heritage Program.

## ATTACHMENTS

- A. Tourism Report – Department of Commerce
- B. State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) Clearance Letter

**ATTACHMENT 1**  
**TOURISM REPORT**  
**MONTANA ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT (MEPA)/HB495**

The Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks has initiated the review process as mandated by HB495 and the Montana Environmental Policy Act in its consideration of the project described below. As part of the review process, input and comments are being solicited. Please complete the project name and project description portions and submit this form to:

Victor Bjornberg, Tourism Development Coordinator  
Travel Montana-Department of Commerce  
PO Box 200533  
1424 9<sup>th</sup> Ave.  
Helena, MT 59620-0533

**Project Name:** Black's Ford FAS Boat Ramp Improvement Project

**Project Location:** Black's Ford FAS, T02S, R02E, Section 19 in Gallatin County.

**Project Description:** Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks proposes improving facilities at Black's Ford FAS by reducing the slope of the boat ramp, and by replacing the existing single-wide concrete-plank boat ramp with a double-wide cast-in-place concrete boat ramp.

1. Would this site development project have an impact on the tourism economy?  
NO YES

If YES, briefly describe:

As described, the project appears to provide better user access and services at this FAS so should have a positive benefit on the area's tourism economy.

2. Does this impending improvement alter the quality or quantity of recreation/tourism opportunities and settings?  
NO YES

If YES, briefly describe:

As described, the project improves the quality of access to this area's recreational opportunities.

Signature Victor Bjornberg, Tourism Development Coordinator, Travel Montana  
Date April 17, 2007



**Attachment B**  
**SHPO Clearance Letter**

File 1a.2



**MONTANA HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

225 North Roberts ♦ P.O. Box 201201 ♦ Helena, MT 59620-1201  
♦ (406) 444-2694 ♦ FAX (406) 444-2696 ♦ [www.montanahistoricalsociety.org](http://www.montanahistoricalsociety.org) ♦

April 13, 2006

**RECEIVED**

APR 17 2006

DESIGN & CONSTRUCTION  
DEPT. OF FISH, WILDLIFE & PARKS

Bardell Mangum  
FWP  
PO Box 200701  
Helena MT 59620-0701

RE: BLACK'S FORD FAS. SHPO Project #: 2006041306

Dear Mr. Mangum:

I have conducted a cultural resource file search for the above-cited project located in Section 19, T2S R2E. According to our records there have been no previously recorded sites within the designated search locales. The absence of cultural properties in the area does not mean that they do not exist but rather may reflect the absence of any previous cultural resource inventory in the area, as our records indicated none.

We feel that there is a low likelihood cultural properties will be impacted. We, therefore, feel that a recommendation for a cultural resource inventory is unwarranted at this time. However, should cultural materials be inadvertently discovered during this project we would ask that our office be contacted and the site investigated. Thank you for consulting with us.

If you have any further questions or comments you may contact me at (406) 444-7767 or by e-mail at [dmurdo@mt.gov](mailto:dmurdo@mt.gov).

Sincerely,

Damon Murdo  
Cultural Records Manager

File: FWP/FISH/2006



**STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE** ♦ 1410 8<sup>th</sup> Ave ♦ P.O. Box 201202 ♦ Helena, MT 59620-1202  
♦ (406) 444-7715 ♦ FAX (406) 444-6575